



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Board Considers Ballot Options to Address Homeless Crisis**

Acting on a [motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas](#), and amendments from Supervisors Sheila Kuehl and Michael Antonovich, the Board of Supervisors called for drafting three potential November 2016 ballot measures asking voters to consider a parcel tax, a sales tax or a marijuana tax to pay for programs to address Los Angeles County's crisis of homelessness.

The most recent poll commissioned by the County concluded more than 69 percent of likely November 2016 voters would support an annual 3 cent per square foot parcel tax to generate ongoing funding to address homelessness. Specifically, voters support a ballot measure that would provide prevention and emergency support services, including job training, rental subsidies, counseling, and treatments for mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction; as well as create permanent and temporary affordable housing for children, seniors, families, foster youth, veterans, the disabled and homeless adults, with citizen oversight and independent audits.

"The quest to end homelessness has become the defining moral, civil rights and social justice issue of our time," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said in the motion. "Now is the time for the Board to identify an ongoing funding stream to put before voters in November that can finance the strategies to meaningfully prevent and reduce the number of homeless in communities across the County."

The electorate's growing concern about homelessness has been highlighted in more than 10 polls conducted since March by conservative and progressive pollsters, academic and philanthropic institutions, think tanks and municipal governments. The same surveys also indicate the electorate's unprecedented willingness to increase taxes – whether through a tax on high-income earners, a parcel tax, sales tax or marijuana tax – to generate ongoing revenue to address the crisis.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has calculated at least \$450 million is needed annually to provide the County's homeless population of 47,000 with supportive services, rental subsidies and other needs. Studies have confirmed that successfully housing the homeless and linking them with support services and employment save taxpayer dollars in avoidable health, law enforcement, property devaluation, and other costs.

"These are really scary times – every neighborhood has encampments of people living on sidewalks," said Lisa Payne with the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing or SCANPH. "This calamity calls out for government action. We urge you to seize the opportunity to seize a parcel tax or other funding measure on the ballot."

Ann Sewill with the California Community Foundation said various polls showed "an outpouring of support from voters" for going to the ballot to raise money to address the homeless crisis. Addressing the Board, she said, "The pragmatic idea is we should do what wins. The visionary idea is we should do what's right. I think you have an opportunity before you with this motion to do both."

Chris Ko with United Way of Greater L.A. said, "Inaction is unthinkable, especially when lives are on the line."

The Board directed Chief Executive Officer Sachi Hamai to present the draft tax initiatives on July 12. The Board could then vote to adopt one or multiple ballot measures for placement on the November 8 ballot.

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